

A

# REVIEW

OF THE

# STATE

OF THE

# BRITISH NATION.

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Saturday, May 31. 1712.

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**T**HIS Clamour and Clutter just now reviv'd about Peace, about not Fighting, and about Treating, cannot but almost force me to come back to that Subject, and therein I must remind you all of my Highlanders Prophecy, of which I have spoken so often; sure no Man ever gave so true an Account of Things, before the Circumstances gave the least light to know them by, as this Man has done; since the Spirit of Prophecy departed from the World — If this Man has not the Second Sight, I can hardly think there is any such

Thing in the World, and if he has, then it may also pass for a hint to us, to remind this Age of what, I think, we very much forget, *viz.* That these Things are all foreknown, directed, and determined by a Secret Hand, by a Prescience imperceptible to the World.

I observe with Regret, our Heads busy, our Passions inflam'd, our Discourse Engag'd about these Publick Affairs, with a Heat uncommon, and I must needs say Unjustifiable on both Sides; one Side Rages at the other: *This Side* will have Peace with the *French*, what-  
ever

ever they pay for it, and fly out against the General Managers and Directors of the last Scene of Affairs for obstructing it: That Side again will have the War carried on, and bend all their Complaint against the Managers and Directors of Scene now drawn; what Distractions, what Fury, is the Exercise of both Sides, and how little decency is observ'd on both Sides, every one is a Witness to — Now go among all the Parties, let them be Church or Dissenters, let them be Clergy or Laity, I do not find, or but very rarely, the least Word among them all, of his Influence who guides and governs the World, and who, sitting on high, laughs at the Devices of the Proud: Surely God has less to do in the Affairs of the World than he used to have, or else Men have less regard to it, less Thought about it, or take less notice of it, than ever they did — Certainly no Age, no Circumstance, ever appear'd in this World, relating to Human Affairs, in which the Notion of the Sovereign Influence of Providence in the World, was so entirely left out.

When we talk of Parties and of Persons, all our regret at Changes is about *Turning out* and about *putting in*, and we fly in the Faces of the Instruments, with the Utmost, and most Implacable Fury, as if Almighty Power could not save us but by the Hands *We like*, or could not punish us but by the Hands *We hate* — As if these Things came all to pass without any Invisible Agency, or without his Concern in it who used formerly to do all Things — *Well* mean you, Gentlemen! who call yourselves Protestants, that own a God, a Providence, and the Government of the World to be his Prerogative? — *What* do you mean by setting up Instruments in his stead, as if the Work was now taken out of his Hands; as if Fate and the

Issues of Nations were no more in the Hands of God; that he had let go the Reins of Government, and they were taken up by Men? — For shame you that read your Bibles, remember that Text, *Cease you from Man, whose Breath is in his Nostrils* — The Fate of the Nation, the Success of the War, the Stability of Establish'd Privileges, does not so entirely depend upon who is General; Or who Lord Treasurer; One great Man can no more Ruin us, than another great Man can save us, without Heaven's Concurrence; and all these heavings and thrustings of Men and Parties, shall submit to bring to pass what was before determin'd to come pass by infinite Power, and not one jot more or less.

When, therefore, you find strange Things Transacting in the World, and you are on either Side extolling these, and depreciating those — This should be the Motto over all the Amazing Occurrences of the World, GOD REIGNS; The Fury of Parties, the Ambition of Princes, the Envy of States-Men, the Power of Armies, what are they? And what can they amount to? Like the Waves of the Sea, they have their *ne plus ultra* fix'd by him who governs them all; *the Wrath of Man shall praise him*, hitherto they may go, *viz.* as far as he permits them, *but no farther*.

What means it then that we are all Worshipping the Party-Idols of our respective Inclinations, and have push'd ourselves by the Heat and Warmth of our Passions, to that height, that the Concern an Over-ruling Hand has in all this, is quite forgot among us: How is it that we never hear a Man in his Regret at these Things or that, satisfy himself with an Ejaculation to Heaven, or a looking up to his Maker? Not a Man says in his Surprise, *Well, they can go no farther*



farther than he that made them will permit : Nor a Man terminates his Fear in the restraints of Omnipotence, or his Anger, in the Limitation God has set to our Passions, *viz*, That *Vengeance is mine*, and the Consequence of this is, That as the Government and Influence of God in the World, the Thoughts of which, would always calm our Passions, is forgot and left out of our Thoughts, so for want of the restraint that this would be to us, and for want of terminating our Reflections there, all that Fury, Fire, want of Charity, Rage, Injustice and Unchristian Treatment of one another proceeds : Men forget what Spirit they are of, and what Name they are or would be call'd by ; and make nothing of calling for Fire from Heaven, to devour one another — Nor can I acquit either Side of this Temper, for sure, like Animosity was never seen in a Nation not in Arms one against another.

Indeed I cannot but acknowledge, that unless Divine Goodness interpose, I cannot but think, that the Fury which now possesses the Spirits of Men in this Age, is come to that height, that it cannot part, it cannot be reduc'd without Blood — A Thing every good Man ought to tremble to think of ; It is true, we are not actually in Arms, the Sword is not yet drawn, but certainly the Passions are all in Arms, the Spirits of Men are on Fire, their Fury is in full Exercise, they kill, slay, burn, and destroy every Day in their Reciprocal Curses, Wishes, and Endeavours ; and if that unhappy Day should come in this Nation, that the present Parties should be let loose by Heaven, upon one another, I firmly believe a more Raging, Bloody, Unmerciful War never was begun in the World, than it would be : Men would neither give Quarter to Body or

Soul, if they could to be O a Way to Wound both together ; nay, such is the Violence and Temper of the Age, that they Murther one another every Day with their Tongues, and like Solomon's Mad-Man, the whole Nation are Employ'd in casting at one another Firebrands, Arrows, and Death.

And whence is all this, but from casting off the Sense of the Almighty Government of God in the World, forgetting that He that made the World, guides it, and will do so in spite of all the Parties and Powers that are, or ever shall be, and in spite of the Fury and Rage of Men, of what Dignity or Quality soever.

And this returns me to the great Subject of Peace now upon the Stocks ; that uneasy Mystery, that gives us all so little Peace among ourselves — We are all now in a new Motion and Ferment, for that, *as it is said*, our General has positive Orders not to Fight — Or, as it was better expressed in the Parliament-House, *not to act offensively*, for I suppose no-body thinks so madly, that the Duke of Ormond should have Orders, that if the French had Attack'd his Army, they should have stood still and let the French have cut them to pieces.

For my part, this is a Thing I shall meddle little with it, at least yet ; all I shall say now to it is, that it is a signal to me of the Certainty of a Peace at Hand, and a little Time will discover the rest, but I cannot refrain from giving one Turn to those People who have all along been so positive that the Peace was already made, and has been made a great while, for I must hold them to their own Words : I confess, I thought it very strange, when I found one of those People Raving like a Mad-Man the other Day, that the Queen should give Orders to the General not to Fight — Pray

—Pray, G<sup>t</sup>lemen, bear with me for one Word to such a Man, let him be who he will, which, if he can Answer, or all his Friends of that Mind, they are the bravest Men at a come-off, that ever were born.

You say the Peace is made, you are satisfied it has been Sign'd a great while ago, *and the like*— Well, and supposing that to be true, Would you have had the Queen then have Murther'd Ten Thousand Men in a Battle? Would you have had her Majesty let her Subjects be Butcher'd, and let them a Killing the Subjects of a Nation you are at Peace with? — How can these Things consist? — If the Peace is made, it is but Honest and Christian to prevent more Blood-shed, unless you would, like *Abaer and Joab*, let the Young Men arise and play together, and have Ten or Twenty Thousand Men kill'd to make a little Sport, as I have heard some call it: Either you are wrong now, or you were wrong before; as for the rest of this Unfighting War, I let it alone till we hear farther.

This is an Argument to none but those Imention, who have prepared this Lash for themselves, by their own prepostrous Arguing about the Peace being already made; nor but that if a Peace be not actually made, yet if it be certain, and so in View, *as some say*, that it is as good as finish'd; I must own it would be but odd to let 200000 Men Fight to-day, who may be all made Friends to-morrow.

After all, I cannot but look back to the *High-land Prophecy*, I have so often mention'd, and again recommend it to your Reading, who has foretold all the Steps of the Peace hitherto, as well as if he had known what was to be done, by seeing the very Transactions, and yet assures us it shall not be finish'd till the latter End of the Year, and tells the very Month: I only give the following Paragraph out of his own Words for the Month of *April* and *May*.

*Peace Surprizes the World now, rather by the various Shapes it appears in, than the means it is procur'd by: The Nations seem rather to drive one another to Peace, than approve of it: Something shall happen in the middle of this Transaction that shall put all Europe on new Measures. Now they begin the Campaign; some Fight and some Treat, and some both Treat and Fight, and some who talk as big as any, neither Fight nor Treat: The War goes on awkwardly and heavily, as if they fought with an ill Will: French Cunning prevails in many Courts, and they have Peace in Effect, when they War in Appearance; thus the War now rather impoverishes than destroys, and there is likely to be more Money than Blood, lost this Campaign.*

THE Reader is desir'd to Correct the following Errors in Review No 184. pag. 738. Col. 1. l. 4. for Taxes r. Trade; pag. 739. col. 1. l. 35. for Superstuties, r. Superstuties; p. 740. col. 2. l. 6: for if, r. it.

## ADVERTISEMENT S.

*By the Author*  
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